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SIPDIS

FOR WHA/CCA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EU](#) [CU](#) [IT](#) [HUMAN RIGHTS](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY: EU COMMON POSITION ON CUBA

REF: SECSTATE 228300

Classified By: POL M/C Tom Countryman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1 (C) Paolo Miraglia, MFA Central America and Caribbean Office Director, stated that the EU Common Position on Cuba was being reexamined by the EU at the insistence of the Zapatero government. He said that the issue would be discussed at the upcoming EU Latin America Working Group (COLAT) November 16 at which time EU ambassadors from Havana would provide input on possible changes to the Common Position. Although he was not aware of any specific proposals, Miraglia stated that one of the principal points that will be analyzed is the efficacy of the current policy of inclusion of dissidents at national day celebrations and a discussion of how to normalize relations with the Castro regime. Miraglia stated that the November 16 COLAT would serve primarily to hear the opinions of EU ambassadors and evaluate different proposals but doubted that any decisions would be made at this time.

2. (C) According to Miraglia, the issue is highly polarized, with countries such as Spain and France pushing for "normalized" relations while others want to maintain the current approach. He stated that Italy is generally in favor of maintaining the current position due to the lack of improvement in the human rights situation in Cuba but is also willing to entertain other proposals.

3. (C) Regarding the Spanish motivation, he stated that the Zapatero government believes that the current approach is not producing results, and in fact is allowing Castro to ostracize EU ambassadors making it difficult for them to make any headway with the regime. In addition to this argument, Miraglia said that the Spanish, due to their traditional ties with Cuba, are keen to maintain a leadership role on this issue and are therefore the driving force behind the reevaluation.

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